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REPORT  
OF THE  
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH  
FOR THE  
MUNICIPAL BOROUGH  
OF  
WILTON

For the Year ended 31st December,  
1946.

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SANITARY AND HEALTH OFFICIALS.

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# ANNUAL REPORT

for the year ended December, 1946,  
on Public Health Matters in the  
Borough of Wilton.

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## SECTION A.

### **General Description of the Borough.**

The small but ancient Borough of Wilton lies in the south of Wiltshire and has a population of two thousand four hundred and forty-nine inhabitants. This population has varied very little in recent years, the birth rate being till quite recently on a par with the death rate and the number of incomers and outgoers equally small.

This failure to increase in size has been due in the past to two main causes, firstly the difficulty of finding empty houses in the Borough even before the recent war and, secondly, the more or less static condition of trade and opportunity of employment.

No new industries have been started in recent years and the only works with any number of employees are the carpet factory and the felt mill. The remainder of the inhabitants are chiefly employed in local shops (Wilton is a small market centre), on the railway, on the roads, or in the neighbouring City of Salisbury.

In the centre of the town, especially, many of the houses are old and inconvenient and very closely crowded together, and while not being actually slum property fall decidedly below modern housing standards. Recent years have only accentuated the desperate need for good class working and middle class houses which had existed here for many years in a lesser degree. There is now, as there always has been, a shortage of good class houses for rental. The following figures give more details.

Population, 2,449.

Acreage, 2,681.

Number of inhabited houses, 764

Number of working class houses, 528.

Number of council houses, 128, and 10 Prefabricated.

Industries and Trades, Wilton Royal Carpet Factory.  
Wilton Felt Mill.

Messrs. Brewers Agricultural  
Works.

Rateable Value, £13,776.

Product of a Penny Rate £52.

Gas Supply, Salisbury Gas Co.

Highways, Administered by the County Council.

Refuse Disposal, by private contract.

Sewage Disposal, works outside the Borough

## Vital Statistics to December, 1946.

### Births.

During the year forty-six children were born alive ; of these, twenty-two were male, and twenty-four were female. Four of the forty-six were illegitimate births.

Live Births—	Total	M	F	} Birth Rate per 1,000 of estimated resident population, 18.8.
Legitimate	42	20	22	
Illegitimate	4	2	2	
Stillbirths—				} Rate per 1,000 births 43.
Legitimate	2	2	0	
Illegitimate	0	0	0	

### Deaths.

31	16	15	} Death rate per 1,000 of estimated resident population, 12.6.

### Causes of Death.

(Last years figures in brackets).

Premature Birth	...	...	...	(0)	2
Congenital Malformations	...	...	...	(0)	1
Cancer	...	...	...	(3)	2
Intracranial Vascular Lesions	...	...	...	(2)	3
Heart Disease	...	...	...	(19)	11



Other Circulatory Disease	..	...	(1)	1
Bronchitis	...	...	(1)	1
Pneumonia	...	...	(1)	1
Other Respiratory Disease	...	...	(1)	0
Tuberculosis (all forms)	...	...	(1)	1
Nephritis	...	...	(1)	1
Other causes	...	...	(5)	5
Road Traffic Act	...	...	(0)	1
Total			(35)	31

### General Statement on the Health of the Borough.

The death rate for 1945 was slightly higher than the usual rate for the Borough, being 14.3 per 1,000. This has dropped for 1946 to a more usual rate here, viz. 12.6 per 1,000.

The birth rate is also more satisfactory, being one of the highest recorded for many years, 18.8. Last year's figure, also above the average, was 16.4.

It will be seen from the above table of causes of death that there was no unusual or excessive mortality from any particular disease, and that the incidence and number of cases followed last years figures closely. Again the great proportion of deaths, approximately one third, occurred as a result of heart disease, mostly in old people. The figure for cancer in the Borough usually varies little over a period of years, running from two deaths to four. This year it stands at two. It will also be noted that three deaths occurred in children under one year of age from congenital deformity and premature birth. These causes added together account for more than half the deaths. The mortality of young and middle aged persons was very small. Thus there was not a single death from infectious disease with the exception of two cases of tuberculosis.

The general health of the Borough was again very good, there being no epidemic of infectious disease, and again not a single case of diphtheria. There were no fatal maternity cases or deaths associated with childbirth.

**SECTION B.**

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**General Provision of Health Services  
for the Borough.**

The Medical Officer spends his whole time in Public Health work, being Medical Officer for the neighbouring rural district of Salisbury and Wilton and also of Mere and Tisbury R.D.

His qualifications are Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Medicine and of Surgery, Diploma of Public Health of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons, England, Certificates of Tropical Medicine and of Tropical Hygiene, London, etc.

During the year Mr. Cooke, who has now left, acted as Sanitary Inspector. He was a fully qualified Sanitary Inspector and also held the certificate for meat inspection. The appointment in Wilton is a whole time one.

Contribution to these two officers' salaries is made under the Public Health Acts.

During the year Dr. Lane continued to act as Medical Officer to the Infant Welfare and Antenatal Clinic.

There are two midwives who devote part of their time to the Borough and part to the Rural area. They also act as school nurses. They are responsible to a local committee acting in conjunction with the County Nursing Association.

Home nursing is not yet specially catered for beyond the amount given by the two nurses mentioned above. An attempt was made to set up a service but this unfortunately failed

***Laboratory Facilities.***

Examination of swabs, and other bacteriological work is carried out at the Greville Laboratory in Salisbury Infirmary. The laboratory is recognised for the examination of milk by the Ministry of Health. Work here is most satisfactorily and promptly carried out.

## *Legislation in force in the Area.*

There are byelaws with respect to Cleansing of Footways and Pavements, Cleansing of Earth-closets, Privies, Ashpits and Cesspools ; for dealing with nuisances from snow, filth, keeping of animals, slaughterhouses ; and regarding cemetery management, dating from 29th April, 1891.

Building bye-laws were adopted 27th August, 1924.

## *Hospital Service available for the Area.*

- (1) *Infectious Fevers.* Joint Districts Isolation Hospital, Old Sarum.
- (2) *General Cases.* General Infirmary, Salisbury.
- (3) *Children.* Arranged by the County Council.
- (4) *Maternity.* Beds are available at Salisbury Infirmary.
- (5) *Venereal Disease.* Salisbury Infirmary Clinic.
- (6) *Tuberculosis.* Winsley Sanatorium and Harnwood Hospital take the majority of cases ; beds are also to be had through the County Council at Savernake and at Alton, or at Bath Orthopædic Hospital.
- (7) *Chronic Sick.* Provision is arranged for these in Tower House, etc.
- (8) *Orthopædic.* Bath Orthopædic Hospital.
- (9) *Mental Cases.* Special schools outside the County, or other County Institutions through the County Council. There is now more adequate provision within the County boundaries.
- (10) { *Puerperal Fever*  
*Puerperal Pyrexia*  
*Ophthalmia Neonatorum* } Arrangements are made and consultations offered by the County Council.
- (11) *Ear, Nose and Throat cases.* Salisbury Infirmary.



## *Hospital Service as a Whole.*

There are no hospitals or nursing homes in the Area itself, and none are necessary, the present arrangements being satisfactory and the area well served. Full advantage is taken of Hospital treatment.

Salisbury Infirmary is equipped to deal with operative cases, and contains an up-to-date pathological laboratory.

There are no maternity or nursing homes in the Area.

The maternal mortality is, as it was last year, nil.

## *Clinics and Treatment Centres.*

(1) *Infant Welfare.* A centre is provided by a committee of ladies supported by voluntary contributions, by the payment of a small fee, and by a subsidy. Antenatal work is also carried out.

(2) *Other Clinics.* There are in Salisbury available for and used by this district a Tuberculosis Dispensary, Venereal Diseases Clinic, and an Orthopædic Centre, provided by the County Council.

There is no school clinic in the Borough, neither are there day nurseries or light clinics

## **SECTION C.**

### **Sanitary Circumstances of the Area.**

#### *Water Supply.*

Wilton has an adequate supply of pure and wholesome water piped throughout the Borough. Although the source is from a shallow well, analysis almost invariably gives highly satisfactory results, and constant care is taken to guard against possible sources of pollution. In addition to this, although the water is efficiently treated by the chloramine process, samples are taken also of the untreated water; these samples are almost invariably found satisfactory.



The water is a hard water, has no plumbosolvent action and is at least partly derived from deep springs. That the supply is ample was proved by the fact that all through the recent war enormous additional quantities were pumped to supply the military.

The Borough has, of course, a piped supply throughout with up-to-date pumps and a satisfactory reservoir, and as has already been explained there is quite a considerable surplus here available from existing works.

### *Report on recent Bacteriological Examination of Water.*

Water sample received on 4th December, 1946, from Wilton Waterworks rising main before treatment.

#### *1.—Bacteriological Count.*

Total colonies growing on agar at 37C in 48 hours :—  
1 per m.l.

#### *2 —B. Coli Counts at 37C in 48 hours and at 44C in 48 hours :—*

Quantity of water	Acid and gas from lactose	
	at 37C	at 44C
Five tubes of 10 m.l.	— — — — —	— — — — —
Five tubes of 1 m.l.	— — — — —	— — — — —

As a result of calculation made from above :—

- (1) Number of Coli Aerogenes per 100 m l. growing at 37C—Nil.
- (2) Number of Fæcal types of B.Coli per 100 m.l. at 44C—Nil.

#### *Opinion*

Bacteriological examination shows no evidence whatsoever of harmful pollution.

### *Pollution of Rivers and Streams.*

This year, as in former years, the deposit of tins, etc., into the river was continued within the precincts of the Borough. The local council have from time to time appealed to the police and to the Catchment Board concerned with the upkeep.

The County Council are of course responsible for the administration of the relevant Act.

At the time of writing it is believed that the Board intend to take some action.

### *Closet Accommodation.*

The water carriage system is in operation in nearly all the closets in Wilton, but there are still a few cases where it is impossible to connect to the sewer.

### *Public Cleansing and Refuse Removal.*

The cleansing and repair of public highways and footpaths is carried out by the County Council by contract. Recently several more lengths of roads came under their direct jurisdiction, thus reducing the amount contracted for. The work on the whole is carried out in an efficient manner, and minor complaints are usually arranged amicably with the local county surveyor.

Refuse removal is undertaken by a private contractor who has served the Borough satisfactorily for many years now, often, during the war, under difficult circumstances. He has now had in use a new and much more satisfactory vehicle, so that the main complaint about this service is removed. Minor complaints arise from time to time, but on investigation these are found to be no fault of our contractor.

### *Inspection of Meat and Foods.*

The policy of centralised slaughtering adopted during the war is still continued, so that there has been no slaughter of animals for food in the Borough. The meat in butchers' shops still, of course, is liable to inspection,

as are tinned and other foods offered for sale. During the year a small amount of varied foods had to be condemned for various reasons. These amounts are made good by the Ministry of Food where they are concerned.

### *Milk Supply to the Borough.*

The cowsheds and dairies within the Borough boundary are as a rule well kept; this year was no exception. Complaints were however made from time to time about the lack of cleanliness in bottling the milk retailed in the Borough, bottles being frequently badly washed. Recently there have been no complaints.

### *Factories and Workshops.*

There are two types of factory, namely, factories with power and without power. Of these, Wilton has 19 with power and 10 without power. During the year there were two complaints by the factory inspector. Additional sanitary accommodation was asked for and has now been provided at one factory. The other complaint concerning a bake house has also been dealt with.

## **Housing.**

There is little to add to last year's report on housing. The only advance accomplished during the year was the erection of ten prefabricated houses. They are very good houses of their type, and competition for tenancy of them was extremely keen. It would take something like one hundred houses to house those without homes of their own, and another one hundred to enable the poorer type of house to be gradually brought up to standard or discarded. Considering the population of Wilton is only two thousand four hundred it means that quite a considerable proportion of the bigger families in the Borough are living in unsatisfactory conditions at the present time.

The Corporation have however made a definite step forward in purchasing a suitably sized housing estate for present and future development. At the time of writing



houses are slowly going up there. The difficulties in Wilton are the difficulties of neighbouring authorities and are too well known to repeat.

### ***Council Houses.***

At the end of the year almost all the Council houses were in need of some sort of attention ; nearly all required painting externally. The roofs of the Ditchampton houses were leaking rather badly, and the Fair View houses gave trouble with their windows. The drainage at the Hollows was also unsatisfactory from time to time until the unsatisfactory portion was opened up and a broken pipe found and repaired. The Council have since appointed an experienced man to deal with the numerous minor housing complaints, but it will take him some considerable time to catch up with existing defects. Generally the Council houses are clean and well kept by the tenants. There were no complaints or evidence of infestation by insect pests during the year.

## **SECTION F.**

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### **Prevalence of and Control over Infectious Disease.**

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This year, 1946, was again a very satisfactory year as far as notifiable infectious disease was concerned. It is surprising that over a period of some eighteen years now this should persistently be the case ; especially when one thinks of the proximity to the neighbouring city with its cinemas, the frequent busses to that city, and the increased mixing of the population generally in other directions. Yet the number of certified cases of infectious notifiable disease was again remarkably small even taking into account the small size of the Borough.

The only distressing feature was the occurrence of two cases of acute anterior poliomyelitis (infantile paralysis). These two cases had, however, no connection with each other, were dealt with promptly and no further cases have occurred up to the time of writing. The two Wilton cases had this in common with cases occurring elsewhere, they were both in strong healthy active young people and were not helped in their incidence by previous or concomitant disease of any kind.

The only advice one can give at present is on general lines, namely, to avoid such places, especially during times when the disease is prevalent, as are crowded and where there is consequently an increased possibility of inhaling the germ from someone else's cough or sputum. Close contact and increased numbers from different areas must undoubtedly be a help in spreading any infectious disease.

This year again there was not a single case of Diphtheria in the Borough. Wilton parents have responded well in past years to the advice to have the very necessary immunisation against diphtheria given to their children. Indeed the greater proportion of children are now immunised. Wilton numbers however are too small to prove that absence of the disease is due to a successful immunisation campaign, though absence over a period of years as we have had might reasonably be concluded to be very nearly a definite proof. I however give below figures which are definite proof taken from the country as a whole.

#### Deaths from Diphtheria—All England.

	Period 1931 to 1940	(average)	2,800
(Campaign started 1941)	1941		2,641
	1942		1,827
	1943	...	1,371
	1944	...	934
	1945	...	722
	1946	...	472

### Notifications of Diphtheria—All England.

Period 1931 to 1940 (average)			58,000
1941	...		50,797
1942	...		41,404
1943	...		34,662
1944	...		29,949
1945	...		25,246
1946	...		18,284

The foregoing figures, in my opinion, show not only the benefit of, but the absolute necessity for immunisation against Diphtheria.

### *General facilities for treatment in case of Infectious Disease.*

Cases of Infectious disease from this district go to the Salisbury and District Joint Isolation Hospital at Old Sarum. The hospital is a good one, admirably run, and has served this and other districts for many years now in an efficient and entirely satisfactory manner.

The demand for accommodation varies of necessity from time to time, but up to date no case of infectious disease urgently requiring accommodation has had to be refused admission.

From this district we send as a rule all cases of diphtheria, nearly all cases of scarlet fever, and in addition any complicated case of any other infectious disease needing special nursing, or where the medical attendant is satisfied that home conditions are such as to render the spread of the disease more likely, or retard or endanger the chance of recovery of the patient. No one had to be sent in under the latter heading this year.

Cases are sent in within a few hours of diagnosis which no doubt has helped us in the past to maintain our very satisfactory record in regard to secondary cases. Cases are sent in by ambulance and if necessary arrangements



can be made for return by ambulance. Private arrangements are however made for return in most cases. An investigation of the premises and disinfection take place in infectious diseases such as, diphtheria, scarlet fever, tuberculosis, etc. Bedding, etc., is put through the steam disinfectant in the case of scarlet fever and tuberculosis.

Notifiable diseases (other than tuberculosis) during the year 1946 :—

Disease	Number of cases	Admitted to Isolation hospital	Deaths
Smallpox	0	0	0
Scarlet Fever	1	1	0
Diphtheria	0	0	0
Acute Pneumonia	1	0	0
Puerperal Fever	0	0	0
Erysipelas	1	0	0
Infantile Paralysis	2	2	0
Dysentery	0	0	0

School intimations of infectious disease were again found helpful, especially in regard to outbreaks of measles and of mumps, etc.

### *Prevention of Blindness and Tuberculosis.*

No action was necessary under regulations governing the employment of persons in the milk trade who were suffering from tuberculosis, nor for the prevention of blindness.

### *Tuberculosis.*

Tuberculosis comes under the control of the County Council who hold regular clinics in Salisbury for this area. During the year there were two deaths from this disease in the Borough. One of these was a long standing case. There were no deaths of unnotified cases.

G. NAPIER.

